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Montana State Fund Guardian

NOVEMBER 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This fall, all State Fund management staff had the opportunity to participate in a leadership training facilitated by The Pacific Institute. Identified as an important objective in our Strategic Business Plan, this excellent training program taught our staff how to properly set meaningful goals and how to translate this goal setting into results—both personal and professional.

Organizations that resist change may not survive in today's increasingly competitive climate. As the facilitators taught us, it's not enough just to set goals and make wishes. Instead, it's a developmental process that takes into consideration all of the key factors that affect performance. The Institute also showed us how to remove fundamental barriers and limitations to personal and organizational growth, and how to replace them with others that bring a new sense of possibility.

This training from The Pacific Institute was very successful and was well received by all who participated. As a result, we are now exploring ways to bring the training to all State Fund staff. As we enter a new world of increased competition and opportunity, we need to tap into our staff's greatest potential to help our organization deal successfully with change—and produce extraordinary results for our customers.

Y2K POWERCOMP™ — DID IT WORK?

By Wes Winden

Last month I spoke of a Y2K Test Team, comprised of members from each department, who would be running through PowerComp™ and PowerComp™ associated software aplications. Well, on November 20th it happend! The Y2K Test Team converged on the building that Saturday morning, ran to their work stations and "hit" the PowerComp™ System full blast. The results came in the following Monday and the word is...we're looking great! However, there is still additional testing that will be conducted. A lot of effort has gone into making sure we, the users, will have an effective system to work with on January 1, 2000. Team members are Jonathan Linder, Stacy Ripple, Ed Benasky, Lisa Carson & Mike Smart (IT Dept); Crystal Murphy, Carolyn Perett, Shawn Bubb, Jeff Hilger & Phyllis McDonald (A&F); Enid Kalaher, Wanda Morgan & Hester Austin (CSU); Terry St.Clair, Darcy Johnson, Christy Weikart, Kim Erickson, Karen Miser & Steve Halferty (UW); and Sherrie Chenovick (Claim). Some of these team members have been working "behind the scenes" for a long time and we owe our "thanks" to their time and efforts. More important news next month though, as we get closer to the Y2K!

WINTER DRIVING

By Keri Maes

What's the leading cause of death during winter storms? Transportation accidents. Preparing your vehicle for the winter season and knowing how to react if stranded or lost on the road are vital to safe winter driving. Do it NOW before winter hits. Check your:

- Battery
- Antifreeze
- Wipers & windshield fluid
- Ignition system
- Thermostat (That's not the lever that turns the heat up inside your car...see your mechanic.)
- Lights
- Exhaust system
- Heater (that's the lever!)
- Defroster
- Brakes
- Oil (winter grade, in Montana we normally use 10w-30.)
- Tires—tread depth, all-season tires are probably adequate for most city type driving. If you cross the passes you may want studded snow tires or obtain a pair of chains or cable chains.

Pre-trip Check:

- Windshield scraper. That's the one you use before you drive. You've all seen peephole drivers—don't be one of them. It is extremely dangerous.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.

Continued on page 2.

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

Winter Driving...Continued from page 1.

- Plan long trips carefully: check State Highway information and local weather report, travel during daylight, ETA to significant persons and leave phone numbers of planned arrival locations.
- Dress appropriately: this usually means warmly; loose layers work best.
- Food: High energy munchies, Power Bars, candy bars and bottles of water.

I made a car kit out of a coffee can, but now it's a 25-gallon rubber maid container. The kit should contain at least the following:

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Necessary medications
- Blankets; sleeping bags work great
- Plastic bags
- Matches
- Extra clothing (hats, mittens, socks, ski bibs, etc.)
- Rain gear
- Sack of sand for traction
- Small shovel
- Tools (screw driver, wrench, pliers)
- Booster cables
- Tire chains, cables
- Cards, games and puzzles, books
- Flares, hazard triangles or a bright colored cloth used as a flag
- Canned fruit and nuts
- Can opener
- Bottled water

It can happen. A woman in North Dakota was stranded for a couple of days in her car several years ago. As it turned out, she had packed a deck of cards and played solitaire for two days to stay occupied. When rescuers found her, she was actually mad because she hadn't won yet! If trapped in a car during a blizzard, here's what you should do:

- Stay in the car. Do not leave the car to search for assistance unless it is obvious and visible. One can become easily disoriented in blowing and drifting snow.
- Display a trouble sign such as flares, triangles or a flag.
- Occasionally run the engine to keep warm. It is recommended approximately 10 minutes per hour.
- Beware of carbon monoxide. Exhaust pipe must be kept clear of snow. Slightly open a downwind window for ventilation.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Minor exercises in the car will increase circulation. Clap hands, move arms and legs, and do not stay in one position too long. If there is more than one person in car, take turns sleeping. Huddle for warmth.
- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather adds strain to the heart. Also, people do not feel thirsty in cold weather and commonly become dehydrated. Drink even though you may not feel thirsty.

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, nose and ear lobes are symptoms of frostbite.

Hypothermia is a condition where the body core temperature drops below 90 degrees. Symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion.

If any of these symptoms are present, warm the person slowly and seek medical assistance. Warm the person's main body trunk first with your own body heat. Extremities such as arms and legs should be warmed last as this could drive cold blood toward the heart. Place the person in dry clothing and wrap their body in a blanket.

Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim caffeine including coffee, tea or soda, or alcoholic beverages. Caffeine stimulates the heart and hastens the effects the cold has on the body. Alcohol is a depressant and can actually slow the heart and increase the effect of cold body temperature.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Rod Wright, Systems Analyst, Information Technology Department. Rod was named Employee of the Month for October 1999.

Rod has unselfishly dedicated all of his time and effort to our new PowerComp™ system. He has been quick to work with key players from all departments and fix the problems they are encountering to help deliver a quality product. His extra effort has undoubtedly made their jobs easier and more productive.

Rod has worked many long and arduous hours in recent months to ensure the new system is up and running first thing in the morning. Due to his effort, he has minimized user downtime. Most impressively, as one co-worker stated, with the long days and extra hours spent working on weekends, "Rod never complains, but only wishes to help to deliver the best system possible." Another co-worker was quick to say that "Rod is truly a committed employee who is a joy to work with even during the most demanding times!"

Congratulations, Rod. You've earned this recognition!

IT'S A MYSTERY

By Morgan Hahn

As a way of promoting communication between individuals, as well as associating a "face" to the name of a co-worker, and perhaps understanding a little better how we all "tick," we've started a new column in the *Guardian*. This is our third installment!

Last month's Mystery Employee was Mr. Bernie Hewitt, otherwise known as our Newest *Senior Underwriter* in the Underwriting and Marketing Department. Employees must be able to read Bernie like a book because we had a dozen immediate responses to our contest, and all the guesses were correct!!! Yes, it's true, Bernie is a Sports FANATIC! Susie Shute, also of the Underwriting and Marketing Department was the quickest to respond. Susie received an AMAZING GIFT as our speedy winner.

You may be the next to receive a wonderful prize, selected by yours truly, Morgan.

Here's this month's *MYSTERY EMPLOYEE:*

Hobbies: *Mystery Employee* enjoys SPORTS (i.e., swimming and any kind of outdoor activities. But, NOT hunting) *(Well what kind of sport is that when the hunted don't have their own assault rifle, too?!)*

Favorite Treat: Hanging out with friends at the bar and/or doing stuff with them. *(Wow, this hint doesn't rule out very many people!)*

Family: *Mystery Employee* has NEVER been married and IS single.

Born: It's pretty obvious, *Mystery Employee* was NOT born in Montana. *(Jeez, this isn't much help either...I think there aren't too many people here that were born in Montana—this is a tough contest!)*

How do you like to spend your free time?: *Mystery Employee* spends free time mostly watching TV at home...favorite shows are MASH 4077 and Disney's Doug in the Morning, both on FOX, and Puzzle Place on PBS.

Pets: Our *Mystery Employee* used to have one pretty, nice dog called "Awesome," but because of this new place, our *Mystery Employee* had to give it away to another nice family.

If you think you know who the *Third Montana State Fund Mystery Employee* is, give me a call, or e-mail me with your best guess!

Good luck!

TRAINING CALENDAR

Word (Advanced); December 3; 9:00 am-12:00 noon (Computer Institute of the Rockies, 104 Broadway)

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA); December 8; 1:00 pm-3:00 pm (L&C Library)

CPR/First Aid; December 9; 8:00 am-5:00 pm (Room 201)

Excel (Intermediate); December 10; 1:00 pm-4:00 pm (Reeder's Alley)

Sexual Harassment; December 10; 1:00 pm-2:30 pm (Room 201)

Ergonomic Training; December 13; 3:00 pm-4:00 pm (To Be Determined)

Getting to Know Underwriting (Part 1); Dec. 14; 9:00 am-10:00 am (Room 201)

New Employee Orientation; December 15; 8:30 am-10:00 am (Room 201)

Getting to Know The Agents; December 20; 9:00 am-10:00 am (Room 201)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes as of November 19, 1999

New Hires
- Ira Herrington (IT)
- Frank Truax (Claim)
- Bob Kocher (Claim)

Departures
- Debra Knowles (A&F)
- Lorna Smith (Claim)
- Chantal VanDaele (UW)
- Marilyn Murray (UW)

Promotions
- Bernie Hewitt (Senior Underwriter)

YOUR CHALLENGE!!!

By Karen Wegner

How to Handle Challenging Customers:

1. Remember...it is nothing personal.

2. Apply the ASAP technique:

   Apologize
   Sympathize
   Accept Responsibility
   Prepare to Help

3. You can handle most of the people....some most of the time.

4. Engage your "Swear Stopper"
   Take control
   Repeat the fact you're trying to help
   Immediately ask questions

5. You are the lightning rod, not the target.

Bonus Tip - No Excuses!

Editor: Chuck Christiansen
Managing Editor: Wes Winden
Employee Reporters:
Morgan Hahn Karen Wegner
Jay Phillips

Please call Wes Winden, 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

This issue of the *Guardian* was copied at Montana State Fund, Helena, MT. Printing and copying costs are available by writing State Fund, P.O. Box 4759, Helena, MT 59604-4759.

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MAILROOM TIPS

By Dwight Bernard

Most of us realize it's important to address our mail in a proper manner. Short from the obvious of the correct address, how you type the address is a big factor.

We use the States Central Mail Bureau barcode machine to read the addresses on our business envelopes. This machine then sprays a barcode on the envelopes for detailed sorting. This detailed sorting helps us save money on postage and speeds delivery of mail by removing several manual-sorting steps.

An address must meet a number of requirements, which allows the machine to read and interpret the address. Most of you know these requirements. There is also a change now that we use Microsoft Word versus WordPerfect. Below is a list of requirements for our addresses:

- Font Type - COURIER - This font type has the highest read rate of any of the standard types. Another type you can use is ARIAL. You may notice I did not mention the font type "Times New Roman." That is because this font in the Word program cannot be read on the barcode machine.
- Font Size - 12
- CAPITALIZE the entire address. You do not want to capitalize the entire letter, just the address.
- Do not BOLD the print. Darker is not always better.
- The only punctuation you need is the hyphen between the zip and zip+4 code.
- Use two spaces between the state and the zip code.
- The attention line must be the first line of the address. It should not come below a company or personal name.
- The delivery address and the city, state and zip code must be the last two lines of the address.
- The address must be the only information visible through the window of an envelope.
- The machine cannot read handwritten addresses.

This seems like a lot, but most of you do a very good job. The biggest change is in the font type. Here is the proper way to address your mail. The sample address below is done in the font type Courier.

```
ATTN MR JOHN SMITH
SMITH ELECTRICAL
1234 N HELENA AVE
HELENA MT  59601-4567
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The address is clean, easy to read, and contains only one punctuation mark. The attention line is on top and everything is capitalized. Remember this type of address not only saves us time and money, but will also help Central Mail do their job in a more efficient manner. This also speeds our mail through the whole postal system.

If you have any questions, give me a call (9335). Also, if you have problems setting up fonts or printing, call the I.T. help desk (6504) and they can get your computer up to snuff.

KUDOS KOLUMN

Great job, CSU! On November 4th, Nance Hughes & Suzie Shute visited Glacier Insurance in Kalispell, MT. The staff there commented on how professional and nice the CSU staff was — all the time! They were extremely pleased with the service they get from all the staff.

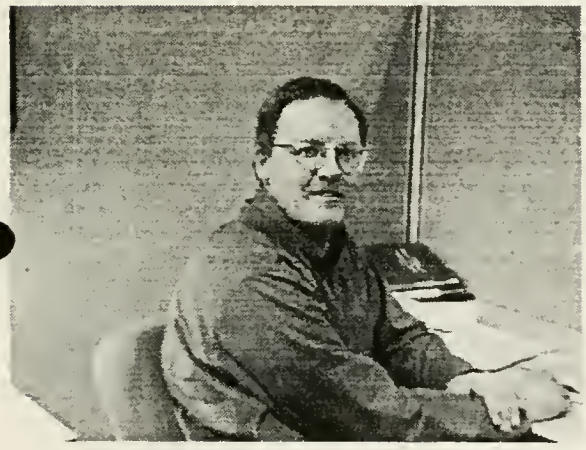
They say two heads are better than one! Well, Beth Hohn and LaVonne Garber have proven this to be true. Congratulations ladies on your IDEA. Their suggestion for an electronic one-time process to add a provider to the legal entity or update existing information in the PowerComp™ System rewarded each of them $150.

The Accounting Staff have a reason to feel warm & fuzzy! They have provided excellent customer service on Pending 09 policies, refunds, payrolls, and returned checks in a prompt and quick manner, according to Holly Wood. What an awesome team to work with!

NEW EMPLOYEES

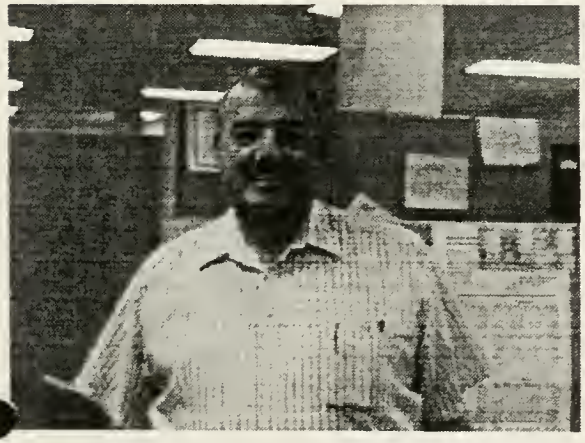
Mary Heare
Senior Claim Adjuster

She's back! Mary Heare returns to the State Fund after spending some time over at the Department of Veteran Affairs and after missing the high performance, high energy atmosphere of the State Fund. Mary brings extensive experience in the insurance claim profession. Prior to her initial employment with us, she also worked for the Department of Administration as a Claims Specialist. Having grown up in eastern Montana, she migrated west to obtain her Bachelor's degree in Political Science and graduate work in Public Administration from the Montana State University, Bozeman in 1995. Mary enjoys reading, walking and being a "mom" for her three lovely daughters. Welcome back, Mary! We're glad you rejoined the team!



Frank Truax
Claim Adjuster Trainee

Frank has worked in the healthcare field for a number of years as a physical therapy assistant and in nursing rehabilitation. He also owned and operated up to 3 food service operations for 2 1/2 years at the Capitol complex. Originally from Great Falls, Frank received a degree in Biology from the University of Montana, Missoula. He's the father of 3 children, 2 boys ages 10 and 7 and one daughter, 8 months old. Welcome aboard Frank! Glad to have you with us.



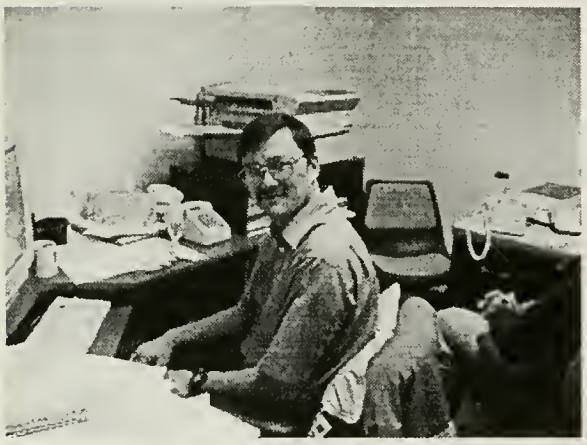
Bob Kocher
Claim Adjuster Trainee

After spending over 25 years as an Independent Insurance Agent, Bob came to us on November 15th from the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB). Prior to that, Bob was with Ram's Head Financial Services and All Purpose Insurance Center, Inc. Bob doesn't claim to be a Bobcat fan even though he's a graduate from MSU Bozeman with a BS degree in Finance, Marketing & Management Options. He and Linda (his wife of 31 years this coming January) have three sons. One son is closer to home living in Helena, with a second son a little further away in Hardin, MT and the third is more than a stone's throw away by living in Worland, WY. Welcome aboard, Bob! We're glad to have you with us.

Continued on back.

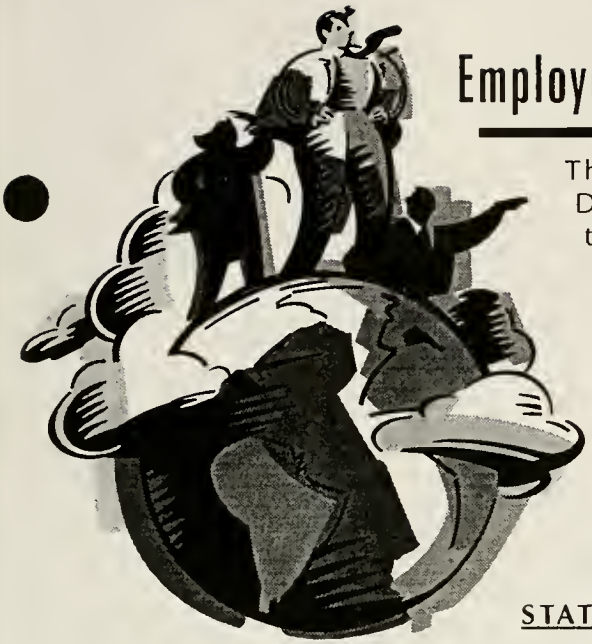
Robb Francetich
Senior Loss Control Consultant

Robb joined the Loss Control Team on October 12th. Previously the Safety Director for Combined Benefits Insurance Company, Robb brings many years of experience in the safety and workers' compensation insurance industry. Robb received his Bachelors degree in Safety and Health and was subsequently certified as a Safety Professional in 1993. An avid Griz fan, Robb "hangs his hat" in Potomac, Montana. Besides his wife, Robb's hobbies include reining horses. Welcome aboard, Robb!



Ira Herrington
Software Developer

Ira has been around the State Fund for a number of years, however, only recently became a member of the staff on November 1st. For the last 2 1/2 years, Ira has been working for Information Engineering (better known as IE) as a programmer/analyst. He received his Bachelors degree in Math and Computer Science from Carroll College, here in Helena. Welcome aboard, Ira!



Employee Action Committee Update • Nov 1999

This Update highlights the Information Technology Department recommendations that originated from the 1998 Employee Opinion Survey, as well as the status of those recommendations. This is not a complete list of all Info Tech/EAC initiatives, but the remainder will follow in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

Information Technology Department

Action: Establish weekly Systems Administration meetings.

STATUS — *IMPLEMENTED AND ONGOING*

I encourage this meeting to be reinstated immediately to communicate priorities. Priorities of both staffing areas are to be set and managed by IT PERC and not to be changed at any other level without prior approval of IT PERC. IT PERC consists of some members of the Executive Management Team, with the Senior VP as chair of the committee. IT PERC meets Wednesday's at 1:00 pm to set IT priorities State Fund-wide.

.....

Action: Monthly open IT Department forum.

STATUS – *COMPLETED*

We will not be holding Monthly Open Forums. We will provide a suggestion/issue box. In our staff meetings, the IT management team will address these suggestions/ issues. The culture at the State Fund has changed. We are striving to foster an entrepreneurial business culture. A large part of this culture is the professional employees of the State Fund. One of my expectations of you, as a professional, is to accept personal responsibility. Issues and problems are easy to identify and complain about. A professional identifies issues, takes action and proposes effective solutions. As a general rule for professionals, you will be expected to bring your issue personally to your supervisor. If you prefer, meeting with your department head is also a forum to bring up issues.

.....

Action: Keep IT Department updated on personnel issues.

STATUS — *COMPLETED*

Many personnel issues can not be discussed in an open forum. These issues will be treated confidentially and you will be informed to the level that it is appropriate. It is a good idea to welcome and greet the new employees and update everyone on the coming and goings within our department. I would encourage this type of action to begin immediately.

Action: Keep nighttime operators up to date on IT issues.

STATUS — *COMPLETE*

I would encourage this to begin immediately. The Systems Administration Director will not be responsible for the minutes of the staff meeting. Each staff member will take turns facilitating the staff meeting and taking minutes.

.....

Action: Foster an environment that encourages peer training.

STATUS - ONGOING

Encouraging peer mentoring is a good idea with a positive direction. While only a few formal classes have been held internally, mentoring has been occuring on a regular basis and will be encouraged to continue.

An area of sensitivity is crossing lines of responsibility. For example, LAN Manager's can assume each other's roles and those of the Network Technician and be inside the box of their responsibility. To have the reverse true, will result in redefinition of the job profile of the affected worker. We have had a few instances of that, where jobs have been reclassified. This has been a direct result of increased responsibility with State Fund's growing dependence on technology and the broad range of skills required to support these systems. This will be more closely managed.

Upcoming PPRP meetings with your supervisor will be an opportune time to discuss with them your area of interests and aspirations. Your supervisor should be asking you these questions. If not, feel free to bring it up in this forum or at any time.

I've required the Director's to evaluate training needs for budgeting and to also identify technical areas of weakness.